of late Shri N.T. Rama Rao; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Government is releasing a commemorative postage stamp on late Shri N.T. Rama Rao. The stamp will be released on 28-5-2000, his date of birth.

Timely Delivery of Mail

3857. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the mail has to be delivered within one to three days following the day of posting;

(b) whether 60 per cent of mail delivery in the country is being delayed; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government for the timely distribution of mail in the country particularly in the rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) The Department of Posts has laid down certain broad norms for delivery of mails for different parts of the country and for different categories of mail including registered mail and money orders. The norms varies from within 48 hours to 120 hours, excluding the day of posting, depending on the distance involved and mode of transport used. The above norms apply to normal areas. For hilly, tribal and remote areas, it may take a little longer. These broad norms are subject to mail carring trains, planes, buses and other public transport maintaining their schedule.

(b) No, Sir. As per the All India Live Mail Survey conducted during 1999, 76.6% of the mails in urban areas and 77.7% of the mails in the rural areas were deliverd within norms.

(c) Arrangements for mail transmission and delivery are continuously reviewed and necessary actions taken for their improvement. Delivery efficiency in the country is also constantly monitored by the Department. Some of the measures taken to improve delivery of mail and to ensure their timely distribution are given below :—

— Close monitoring of the collection, transmission, processing and delivery of mails both at the field and Directorate levels;

— Sorting of machineable mails in Mumbai and Chennai on Automatic Letter Sorting Machines to expedite sorting.

— Installation of Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT) stations and Extended Satellite Money Order (ESMO) stations at Post Offices to speed up transmission of Money Orders to all areas including remote, hilly and backward areas.

— Segmentation of mails into Green (local) Channel, Metro Channel, Rajdhani Channel, Business Channel, Bulk Mail Channel and Periodicals (Patrika) Channel to ensure smooth processing and quicker transmission and delivery.

— Computerisation of registration sorting in major mail offices and mail transmission at transit mail offices in the Metro and other important cities.

— Mechanisation of delivery through the use of mopeds.

Counterfeit Stamps Racket in Visakhapatnam

3858. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether counterfeit stamps racket has been busted recently in Visakhapatnam and the kingpin arrested in Mumbai;

(b) if so, the expected amount of counterfeit stamps racket unearthed; and

(c) the measures taken to prevent such malpractices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) Yes, Sir. A counterfeit stamp racket recently came to light in Visakhapatnam. But this pertained to judicial and court fee stamps only.

(b) and (c) Does not arise as printing and sale of judicial and court fee stamps pertain to the respective State Government.